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of the **MINUTES** *of the*
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AND

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

FIRST ANNUAL CONVENTION

OF THE

PEOPLE OF COLOUR,

HELD BY ADJOURNMENTS IN THE

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,

FROM THE

Sixth to the Eleventh of June,

INCLUSIVE,

1831.



PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE COMMITTEE
OF ARRANGEMENTS.

1831

MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
FIRST ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE
PEOPLE OF COLOUR.



The Delegates met on Monday, the 6th of June in the brick Wesleyan church, Lombard Street, pursuant to public notice, signed on behalf of the Parent Society, at Philadelphia, by Dr. Belfast Burton and William Whipper.

Present the following gentlemen, viz.

John Bowers, Dr. Belfast Burton, James Cornish, Junius C. Morel, Wm. Whipper.	}	Philadelphia.
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Rev. Wm. Miller, Henry Sipkins, Thos. L. Jennings, Wm. Hamilton, James Pennington.	}	New York.
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Rev. Abner Coker, Robert Cowley.	}	Maryland.
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Abraham D. Shad, Rev. Peter Gardiner.	}	Delaware.
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William Duncan,	Virginia.
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Who presented their credentials, and took their seats accordingly.—

After an appropriate prayer by the Rev. W. Miller, on motion the convention proceeded to business, by electing
 JOHN BOWERS, *President*.

ABRAHAM D. SHAD, }
 WILLIAM DUNCAN, } *Vice Presidents.*

WILLIAM WHIPPER, *Secretary*.
 THOS. L. JENNINGS, *Assistant Secretary*.

When the house was declared organized, on motion, the Rev. Charles W. Gardiner and the Rev. Samuel Todd were appointed chaplains for this convention, they not being of the delegation.

On motion, it was resolved, that a committee be appointed to institute an inquiry into the general condition of the free people of colour, throughout the United States, with such other information thereon, as may be necessary for the convention to be in possession of, and to report when prepared, who, accordingly reported at a subsequent meeting, and their report was unanimously accepted and adopted; and is as follows:

Brethren and Fellow Citizens,

We, the committee of inquiry, would suggest to the convention the propriety of adopting the following resolutions, viz.: Resolved,

That in the opinion of this convention, it is highly necessary, that the different societies engaged in the *Canadian Settlement*, be earnestly requested to persevere in their praiseworthy and philanthropic undertaking; firmly believing, that at a future period, their labours will be crowned with success.

The committee would also recommend this convention to call on the free people of colour, to assemble *annually* by delegation, at such place as may be designated as suitable.

They would also respectfully submit to your wisdom not only the propriety, but the necessity of your deliberate reflection, on the present dissolute, intemperate, and ignorant condition of the coloured population throughout the United States; nor would they be understood as referring to these unfortunate circumstances, by adding degradation to objects already degraded and miserable; but with the most sympathizing and heartfelt commiseration, to show

the obligation you as the true guardians of our interests are bound to obviate, as far as may be practicable, by wholesome advice and good counsel.

The committee consider it as highly important, that the convention recommend the necessity of creating a general fund, to be denominated the CONVENTIONAL FUND, for the purpose of advancing the objects of this and future conventions, as the public good may require.

They would further recommend that the Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States be read in our conventions; believing, that the truths contained in the former are incontrovertable, and that the latter guarantees in letter and spirit to every freeman born in this country, all the rights and immunities of citizenship.

Your committee with regret have witnessed the many oppressive, unjust and unconstitutional laws, which have been enacted in different parts of the Union, against the free people of colour, and they would call upon this convention as possessing the rights of freemen, to recommend to the people through their delegation, the propriety of memorializing the proper authorities, whenever they may feel themselves aggrieved or their rights invaded, by any cruel or oppressive laws.

And your committee would further report, that in their opinion, *Education, Temperance, and Economy*, are best calculated to promote the elevation of mankind to a proper rank and standing among men, as they enable him to discharge all those duties enjoined on him by his Creator. We would therefore respectfully request an early attention to those virtues among our brethren, who have a desire to be useful.

And lastly, your committee view with unfeigned regret, and respectfully submit to the wisdom of this convention the operations and misrepresentations of the American Colonization Society, in these United States.

We feel sorrowful to see such an immense and wanton waste of lives and property, not doubting the benevolent feelings of some individuals engaged in that cause.—Your committee cannot for a moment doubt, but that the cause of many of our unconstitutional, unchristian, and unheard of sufferings, emanate from that unhallowed source; and they would call on Christians of every denomination, firmly to resist it.

The convention was favoured with a visit from the Rev. S. S. Joycelyn of New Haven, (Conn.,) Messrs. Aurthur Tappan, of New York, Benjamin Lundy, of Washington, (D. C.,) William L. Garrison, of Boston, (Mass.,) Thomas Shipley and Charles Pierce, Philadelphia.

When on motion, it was unanimously resolved, that the afore-mentioned gentlemen have permission to make any inquiries or communications, which they might deem proper.

In pursuance of this privilege, Messrs. Jocleyne, Tappan and Garrison, severally addressed the convention on the subject of Education, and informed the convention that their chief business with them was to submit to their body a plan for establishing a College, for the education of Young Men of Colour, on such basis, as cannot but elevate the general character of the coloured population—

They, therefore, solicited the favour of the convention, to appoint a committee to confer with them on the subject.

The convention, feeling the importance of the communication, appointed a committee to consult with the above named gentlemen.

The committee, to whom was submitted the duty of conferring with Messrs. Tappan, Joycelyn and Garrison, reported as follows:—

That a plan had been submitted to them by the above named gentlemen, for the liberal education of Young Men of Colour, on the Manual Labour System, all of which they respectfully submit to the consideration of the convention, and are as follow:—

The plan proposed is, that said College is estimated to cost about \$20,000, to be erected at New Haven, and established on the Manual Labour System, by which, in connection with a scientific education, they may also obtain a useful Mechanical or Agricultural profession, and, (they farther report, having received information,) that a benevolent individual has offered to subscribe one thousand dollars towards this object, provided, that a farther sum of nineteen thousand dollars can be obtained in one year.

After an interesting discussion, the above report was unanimously adopted, one of the inquiries by the convention was, in regard to the place of location. On interrogating the gentlemen why New Haven should be the place of location, they gave the following as their reasons:—

1st. The scite is healthy and beautiful.

2d. Its inhabitants are friendly, pious, generous, and humane.

3d. Its laws are salutary and protecting to all, without regard to complexion.

4th. Boarding is cheap and provisions are good.

5th. The situation is as central as any other that can be obtained with the same advantages.

6th. The town of New Haven carries on an extensive West India trade, and many of the wealthy coloured residents in the Islands would no doubt send their sons there to be educated, and thus a fresh tie of friendship would be formed, which might be productive of much real good in the end.

And, last, though not least, the classic fame of New Haven is well known, wherever Arts or Sciences have made their appearance.

The convention, having received the report of the committee, and being deeply impressed with the importance of such an institution, do hereby resolve, that it is highly expedient to make an effort to carry the same into effect, under due regulations. Therefore, resolved, that this convention earnestly recommend to our Brethren, to contribute as God has given them the ability, to aid in carrying into operation the proposed Institution; and the convention would distinctly wish it to be understood, that the trustees of the contemplated Institution, shall, a majority of them be coloured persons, the number proposed is seven, three white and four coloured; who shall all be elected by the subscribers, contributors, or their representatives: the elections to be held in the city of New York, unless ordered otherwise by the convention.

The trustees shall annually report the state and condition, with all other necessary information relating to the Institution to the annual conventions.

On motion, the Rev. Samuel E. Cornish, was unanimously elected General Agent, to collect funds, in aid of the contemplated Institution, (his necessary compensation being guaranteed by the liberality of the benevolent individual before alluded to) with power to appoint sub-agents, at such places where the convention may have made no appointments.

On motion, resolved, that Arthur Tappan, Esq., at New York, be appointed to receive as treasurer, all moneys that

may be collected for the purpose of establishing the proposed Institution at New Haven, he satisfying the executive committee at New York.

And on motion, it was resolved, that there be Provisional committees appointed, whose duty it shall be to aid and assist the agent or agents that may be appointed in the discharge of their duties.

And, that the Provisional committee at New York shall be the executive committee until the Trustees are appointed.

Here follows the several Provisional committees, viz.—

BOSTON.

Rev. Hosca Reiston, Deacon Robert Roberts, James G. Barbadoes, and Rev. Samuel Snowden.

NEW YORK.

Rev. Peter Williams, Boston Cromwell, Philip Bell, Thomas Downing, Peter Voglesang.

PHILADELPHIA.

James Forten, Robert Douglass, Snr., Joseph Cassey, Richard Howell, Robert Purves.

BALTIMORE.

Thomas Green, James P. Walker, Rev. Samuel G. Mathews, Isaac Whipper, Samuel Hiner.

NEW HAVEN.

Biars Stanley, John Creed, Alexander C. Lucan.

BROOKLYN, (L. I.)

Jacob Deyes, Henry Thomson, Willis Jones.

WILMINGTON, (Del.)

Rev. Peter Spencer, Jacob Morgan, William S. Thomas.

ALBANY.

Benjamin Latimore, Captain Schuyler, Captain Francis March.

WASHINGTON, (D. C.)

William Jackson, Aurther Waring, Isaac Carey.

LANCASTER, (Pa.)

Charles Butler and Jared Grey.

CARLISLE, (Pa.)

John Peck and Rowland G. Roberts.

CHAMBERSBURG, (Pa.)

Dennis Berry.

PITTSBURG.

John B. Vashon, Lewis Gardiner, Abraham Lewis.

NEWARK, (N. J.)

Peter Petitt, Charles Anderson, Adam Ray.

TRENTON.

Sampson Peters, Leonard Scott.

On motion, it was resolved, that the convention appoint a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary, to hold their office for one year or until the next convention, all of whom shall reside in the city or county of Philadelphia, and be styled the Conventional Board, who shall act as the representatives of the convention during its recess.

Whereupon the following persons were duly elected.

John Bowers, President.

Frederick A. Hinton, Vice President, Joseph Casey, Treasurer, Junius C. Morel, Corresponding Secretary, Charles H. Leveck, Recording Secretary.

On motion, resolved, that there be a Vice President and Corresponding Secretary in each state, to hold their offices for the term of one year, or until others are appointed whose duties it shall be to use every exertion to obtain moneys and remit the same to the Treasurer of the conventional fund at Philadelphia, and that the officers have power to fill any vacancies that may occur in their body by resignation or otherwise.

Whereupon the convention appointed the following officers.

NEW YORK.

Thomas L. Jennings, Vice President; Peter Voglesang, Corresponding Secretary.

MASSACHUSETTS.

James G. Barbadoes, Vice President; Henry H. Mondy, Corresponding Secretary.

MARYLAND.

Rev. Abner Cocker, Vice President; Robert Cowley, Corresponding Secretary.

RHODE ISLAND.

George C. Willis, Vice President; Alfred Niger, Corresponding Secretary.

DISTRICT COLUMBIA.

William Wormley, Vice President; John W. Prout, Corresponding Secretary.

DELAWARE.

Rev. Peter Spencer, Vice President; Abraham D. Shad, Corresponding Secretary.

VIRGINIA.

James Wilkins, Vice President; William Duncan, Corresponding Secretary.

NEW JERSEY.

Leonard Scott, Vice President; with permission to appoint his Secretary.

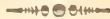
CONNECTICUT.

Scipio C. Augustus.

OHIO.

Charles Hatfield, Vice President; John Liverpool, Corresponding Secretary.

On motion of Mr. Jennings it was resolved, that the Vice Presidents and Secretaries of each state are hereby requested to use every exertion in recommending the formation of associations for the purpose of raising funds for the great object in view, and that each society appoint its own Treasurer, who shall pay over all moneys so collected to the Treasurer of the general fund at Philadelphia.



RULES

AND

REGULATIONS

TO BE OBSERVED BY THE CONVENTIONAL
BOARD OF OFFICERS.

1st. The funds shall be under the immediate control of the officers of the convention during their continuance in office, subject to the following restrictions, viz.—

They shall pay all moneys appropriated by the convention, and for that purpose they are hereby invested with authority to draw on the Treasurer for the same.

They shall pay all the ordinary expenses of the convention that may be necessary and proper, and shall with proper vouchers account to the annual convention for the same at each session.

The President shall preside at each meeting of the board of officers which shall form a council for the transaction of the business of the convention during its recess.

During the absence or inability of the President to preside, the Vice President shall be competent to discharge all of his duty in the council.

The Recording Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of the meetings of the officers at any time or times, which minutes, with all other useful matter that may come under

his observation, shall be laid before the annual conventions from time to time.

The Treasurer shall receive all moneys that may be collected by all the different societies, (which now are or hereafter may be subject to the order of the convention,) for which the President shall take his receipt. He shall pay all moneys as the council may draw on him for the order, being signed by each of the council.

The Corresponding Secretary shall notify the Vice Presidents and Secretaries of their appointments, together with the general views of the convention in relation to the Canadian settlement.

He shall, also, hold the most extensive and faithful correspondence with the committees and agents appointed to advance the interests of the proposed college, holding his correspondence subject to the inspection of the President and Vice Presidents only.

No moneys shall be drawn from the funds, but by consent of a majority of the council.

The convention recommends the parent society at Philadelphia and all others engaged in the Canadian purchase, to alter their constitutions and by-laws, so as to become auxiliary to the convention, to the Treasurer of which they shall remit their funds at stated times.

On motion of Mr. Jennings, resolved, that this convention highly approve of the exertions of the parent society and its auxiliaries, (recommended by the last convention,) for the able and zealous manner in which they have discharged their duties, far exceeding the most sanguine expectations of its friends.

Resolved, that this convention approves and highly appreciates the laudable intention of (Junius C. Morel and John P. Thompson,) to establish a weekly Journal in the city of Philadelphia, in aid of the cause of our oppressed brethern, and pledge ourselves to use our influence in promoting it to public patronage.

Resolved, that the thanks of this convention be given to Messrs. Shipley, Lundy, Tappan, Garrison, Jocelyn and Peirce, for the friendship evinced by them towards this convention, and its constituents.

On motion, resolved, that the convention recommend to the people of colour *throughout the United States*, to set apart the fourth day of July, as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer—and to beseech Almighty God to interpose on our behalf, that the shackles of slavery may be broken, and our sacred rights obtained, and that there be appropriate addresses delivered on that day, and collections taken and forwarded to the Treasurer at Philadelphia, for the general purposes of the convention.

It was further resolved, that the editors of the “Genius of Universal Emancipation,” “The Liberator,” and “African Sentinel,” are our tried friends, and fearless advocates of our rights and promoters of our best interests, are entitled to a prominent place in our affections.

That the principles emanating from said presses, ought to be proclaimed throughout the world, and read by every friend of the rights of man—and that we pledge ourselves to use all our influence in promoting the support and circulation of such vehicles.

On motion, it was resolved that the next annual convention be held in the city of Philadelphia, on the first Monday in June, 1832.

On motion, it was resolved that each society in the United States, (organized by the recommendation of this convention) be authorized to send delegates not exceeding *five* in number, to represent them in the general convention to be held aforesaid; and that in places where it is not practicable at present to form societies, the people shall have the same privilege, *provided*, they contribute to the furtherance of the objects of the convention.

On motion, the convention recommends to the people of colour throughout the United States, the discontinuance of

public processions on *any* day, considering it as highly injurious to our interests as a people.

On motion, it was unanimously resolved, that this convention feels grateful for the kind services rendered by the American Society for the Abolition of Slavery, in the United States—also, to the Anti-Slavery Society in Great Britain, and to the friends of the rights of man wherever dispersed.

Adjourned, sine die.

JOHN BOWERS, *President.*

WILLIAM WHIPPER, }
THOMAS L. JENNINGS, } *Secretaries.*

Philadelphia, June 11th, 1831.

CONVENTIONAL ADDRESS.

Respected brethren and fellow citizens—

In accordance with a resolution of the last Convention, we have again been assembled, in order to discharge those duties which have devolved upon us by your unanimous voices.

Our attention has been called to investigate the political standing of our brethren wherever dispersed, but more particularly the situation of those in this great republic.

Abroad, we have been cheered with pleasant views of humanity, and the steady, firm, and uncompromising march of equal liberty to the human family. Despotism, tyranny, and injustice have had to retreat, in order to make way for the unalienable rights of man. Truth has conquered prejudice, and mankind are about to rise in the majesty and splendour of their native dignity.

The cause of general emancipation is gaining powerful and able friends abroad. Britain and Denmark have performed such deeds as will immortalize them for their humanity in the breasts of the philanthropists of the present day;

whilst, as a just tribute to their virtues, after ages will yet erect unperishable monuments to their memory. (Would to God we could say thus of our own native soil!)

And it is only when we look to our own native land, to the birth place of our *fathers*, to the land for whose prosperity their blood and our sweat have been shed, and cruelly extorted, that the Convention has had cause to hang its head and blush. Laws, as cruel in themselves as they were unconstitutional and unjust, have in many places been enacted against our poor unfriended and unoffending brethren; laws, (without a shadow of provocation on our part,) at whose bare recital the very savage draws him up for fear of the contagion—looks noble and prides himself because he bears not the name of a Christian.

But the Convention would not wish to dwell long on this subject, as it is one that is too sensibly felt to need description.

We would wish to turn you from this scene with an eye of pity, and a breast glowing with mercy, praying that the recording angel may drop a tear, which shall obliterate for ever the remembrance of so foul a stain upon the national escutcheon of this great republic.

This spirit of persecution was the cause of our Convention. It was that first induced us to seek an asylum in the Canadas, and the Convention feel happy to report to their brethren that our efforts to establish a settlement in that province have not been made in vain. Our prospects are cheering; our friends and funds are daily increasing; wonders have been performed far exceeding our most sanguine expectations already have our brethren purchased eight hundred acres of land; and two thousand of them have left the soil of their birth, crossed the lines, and laid the foundation for a structure which promises to prove an asylum for the coloured population of these United States. They have erected two hundred log houses, and have five hundred acres under cultivation.

And now it is to your fostering care the Convention appeal, and we appeal to you as to men and brethren, yet to enlarge their borders.

We therefore, ask of you, brethren, we ask of you, philanthropists, of every colour, and of every kindred, to assist us in this undertaking. We look to a kind Providence, and to you, to say whether our desires shall be realized, and our labours crowned with success.

The Convention has done its duty, and it now remains for you, brethren, to do yours. Various obstacles have been thrown in our way by those opposed to the elevation of the human species; but, thanks to an all-wise Providence, his goodness has as yet cleared the way, and our advance has been slow but steady. The only thing now wanted, is an accumulation of funds, in order to enable us to make a purchase agreeable to the direction of the first Convention; and, to effect that purpose, the Convention has recommended, to the different societies engaged in that cause, to persevere and prosecute their designs with doubled energy; and we would earnestly recommend to every coloured man, (who feels the weight of his degradation,) to consider himself in duty bound to contribute his mite towards this great object. We would say to all, that the prosperity of the rising generation mainly depends upon our active exertions.

Yes, it is with us to say whether they shall assume a rank and standing among the nations of the earth, as men and freemen, or whether they shall still be prized and held at market price. Oh, then, by a brother's love, and by all that makes man dear to man—awake in time! Be wise!—Be free! Endeavour to walk with circumspection: be obedient to the laws of our common country: honour and respect its lawmakers and lawgivers; and, through all, let us not forget to respect ourselves.

During the deliberations of this Convention, we had the favour of advising and consulting with some of our most

eminent and tried philanthropists,—men of unblemished character and of acknowledged rank and standing.—Our sufferings have excited their sympathy; our ignorance appealed to their humanity; and, brethren, we feel that gratitude is due to a kind and benevolent Creator, that our excitement and appeal have neither been in vain. A plan has been proposed to the Convention for the erection of a college for the instruction of young men of colour, on the manual labour system, by which the children of the poor may receive a regular classical education, as well as those of their more opulent brethren, and the charge will be so regulated as to put it within the reach of all. In support of this plan, a benevolent individual has offered the sum of one thousand dollars, provided that we can obtain subscription to the amount of nineteen thousand dollars in one year.

The Convention has viewed the plan with considerable interest, and, after mature deliberation, on a candid investigation, feels strictly justified in recommending the same to the liberal patronage of our brethren, and respectfully solicit the aid of those philanthropists who feel an interest in sending light, knowledge, and truth, to all of the human species.

To the friends of general education, we do believe that our appeal will not be in vain. For, the present ignorant and degraded condition of many of our brethren in these United States (which has been a subject of much concern to the convention,) can excite no astonishment, (although used by our enemies to show our inferiority in the scale of human beings;) for, what opportunities have they possessed for mental cultivation or improvement. Mere ignorance, however, in a people divested of the means of acquiring information by books, or an extensive connexion with the world, is no just criterion of their intellectual incapacity; and it has been actually seen, in various remarkable instances, that the degradation of the mind and character, which has been too has-

tily imputed to a people kept, as we are, at a distance from those sources of knowledge which abound in civilized and enlightened communities, has resulted from no other causes than our unhappy situation and circumstances.

True philanthropy disdains to adopt those prejudices against any people which have no better foundation than accidental diversities of colour, and refuses to determine without substantial evidence and incontestable fact as the basis of her judgment. And it is in order to remove these prejudices, which are the actual causes of our ignorance, that we have appealed to our friends in support of the contemplated institution.

The convention has not been unmindful of the operations of the American Colonization Society, and it would respectfully suggest to that august body of learning, talent, and worth, that, in our humble opinion, strengthened, too, by the opinions of eminent men in this country, as well as in Europe, that they are pursuing the direct road to perpetuate slavery, with all its unchristianlike concomitants, in this boasted land of freedom; and, as citizens and men whose best blood is sapped to gain popularity for that institution, we would, in the most feeling manner, beg of them to desist: or, if we must be sacrificed to their philanthropy, we would rather die at home. Many of our fathers, and some of us, have fought and bled for the liberty, independence, and peace which you now enjoy: and, surely, it would be ungenerous and unfeeling in you to deny us an humble and quiet grave in that country which gave us birth?

In conclusion, the Convention would remind our brethren that knowledge is power, and to that end, we call on you to sustain and support by all honourable, energetic, and necessary means those presses which are devoted to our instruction and elevation, to foster and encourage the mechanical arts and sciences among our brethren, to encourage simplicity, neatness, temperance, and economy in our ha-

bits, taking due care always to give the preference to the production of freemen wherever it can be had.—Of the utility of a general Fund, the Convention believes there can exist but one sentiment, and that is for a speedy establishment of the same. Finally, we trust our brethren will pay due care to take such measures as will ensure a general and equal representation in the next Convention.

Signed

Belfast Burton,
Junius C. Morel,
William Whipper.

Publishing Committee.

DELEGATES' NAMES.

John Bowers,
Dr. Belfast Burton,
James Cornish,
Junius C. Morel,
Wm. Whipper. } Philadelphia.

John Peck, Carlisle, (Pa)

Rev. Abner Coker,
Robert Cowley. } Maryland.

Rev. Wm. Miller,
Henry Sipkins,
Thos. L. Jennings,
Wm. Hamilton, } New York.

James Pennington, Long Island.

Abraham D. Shad,
Rev. Peter Gardiner. } Delaware.

William Duncan, Virginia.

The Conventional Board of Officers beg leave to give their unfeigned thanks to their friend and brother, the Rev. Lewis G. Wells, of Baltimore, for his liberality in appropriating the gross proceeds of one night's lecturing on phrenology to the benefit of the fund.

JOHN BOWERS, *Pres't.*

CHARLES H. LEVEOK, *Secretary.*

